

## Sport

## Brazil top final Sprint Soccer Poll

KANSAS CITY, Mo., July 19 (AP): The results of the final 1994 Sprint Soccer Poll, a weekly ranking of the top 10 national soccer teams as determined by a panel of 51 international soccer journalists, through Monday, July 18. The rankings are based on a 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 system, with first place teams receiving 10 points, second place receiving 9, etc. First place votes are in parentheses:

1. Brazil (51), 510 points.
2. Italy, 459.
3. Netherlands, 404.
4. Germany, 307.
5. Sweden, 258.
6. Bulgaria, 188.
7. Romania, 139.
8. Belgium, 84.
9. Nigeria, 34.

## Abahani take on Brothers today

## Sports Reporter

Defending champions Brothers Union take on Abahani Krira Chakra in the first semifinal of the Beximco 12th Federation Cup football tournament at the Dhaka Stadium today.

The match kicks off at 5.30 pm.

Bangladesh Television and Radio Bangladesh will cover the match live.

Abahani, winners of the Charma Cup in Calcutta this year and the DMFA Cup, the curtain-raising tournament of this season, are looking for a third with two Iraqi recruits Nazar Ali Hossain and Zasim Mehdi fit and kicking.

Brothers Union, who finished runners-up to Abahani in the DMFA Cup, will rely on their local resources to defend the only title in their club history.

Tickets for the galleries have been fixed at Taka 25 for both the semifinals.

The tickets will be on sale at the counters of the Dhaka Stadium from 2.30 pm.

## Two more Russians for Mohammedans

## Sports Reporter

Intataev Gearman and Bre-gvadze Vitali, both from Russia, signed for Mohammedan Sporting Club at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) office yesterday, completing Mohammedans' quota of four foreign recruits for this season.

However, although Mohammedans have four foreigners on paper, they will have to do with three as one of the two earlier signings — Mikhail Karataev — was sent home after lackluster performances in the recently concluded DMFA Cup.

That means Intataev and Vitali along with Andre Kazakov, in the city since he arrived with Karataev early this year, will have to galvanize the Mohammedan attack, weakened by the players' revolt at the onset of the inter-club players' transfer which left the defending league champions robbed of a number of key booters.

## Coca-Cola teams up with AFC

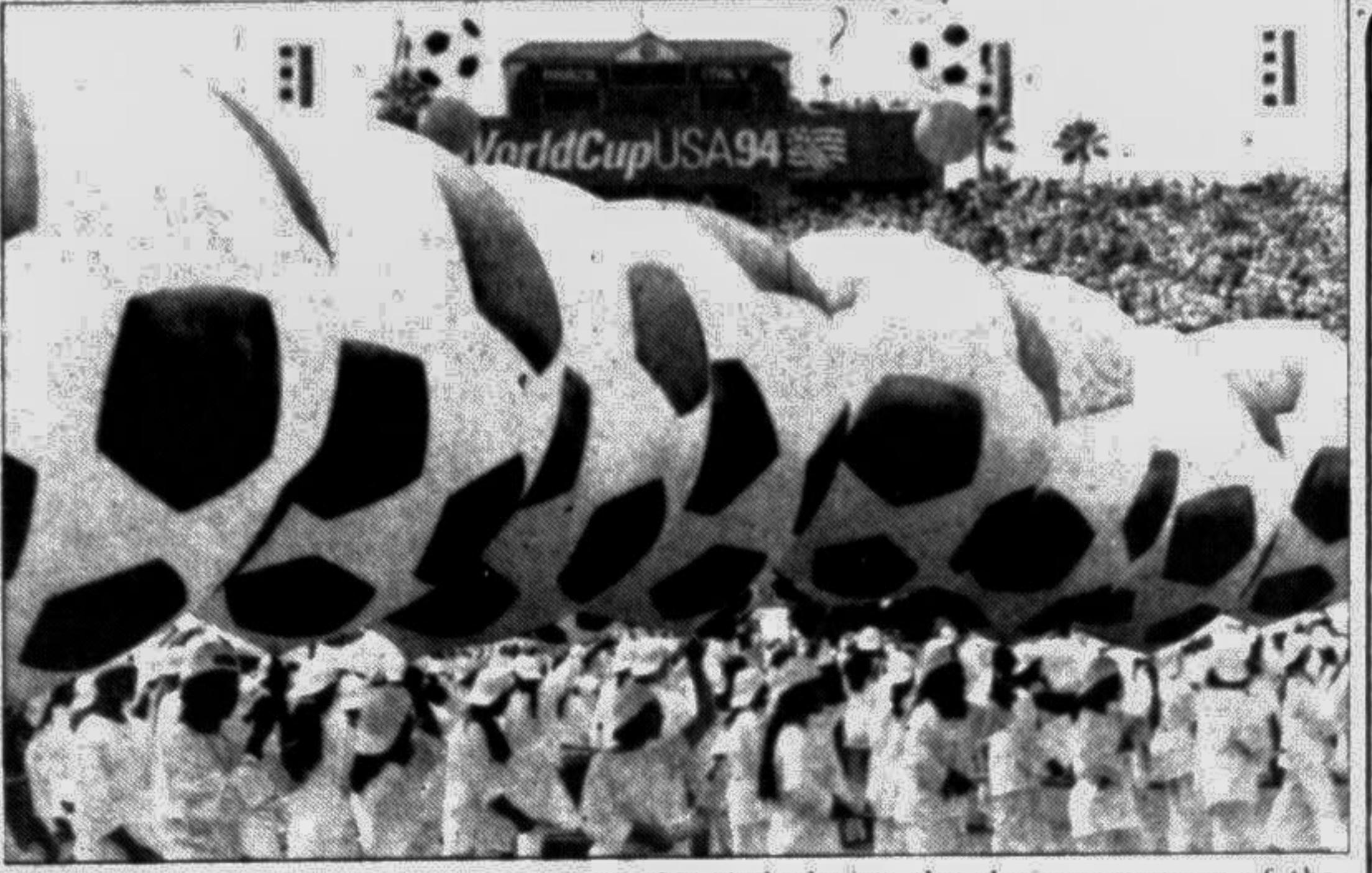
The Coca-Cola Company has signed a four-year sponsorship agreement with the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) as part of an un-precedented undertaking for the long-term continued development of football in Asia.

The agreement covers World Cup and Olympic Asian final qualifying rounds, Asian Cup, Asian Club championships, Asian Cup-winners Cup, Asian under-16 and under-19 youth championships, Asian women's championship, and Afro-Asian club and Nations Cup tournaments.

"The Coca-Cola Company has been a strong partner of FIFA for many years, and has been involved with youth development activities in Asia for nearly 20 years. We are, therefore, very pleased to formalise this sponsorship with them," said Mr. Velappan.

Announcing the sponsorship agreement in Bangladesh, Khalid Raja business development manager (Bangladesh) said that the official tie-up with the AFC complements the Coca-Cola organisation's existing worldwide association with FIFA.

The FIFA/Coca-Cola World youth championship sponsorship began in 1975 and currently extends to the year 2001. In addition, the Coca-Cola Company also sponsors the FIFA/Coca-Cola World Football Development Programme, which includes International Academies future seminars, and Coca-Cola go for Goal youth training.



Giant soccer balloons are carried across the pitch during the closing ceremony of the World Cup at the Pasadena Rose Bowl on July 17 just before the start of the Brazil-Italy final. — AFP photo

## Something for everyone



LOS ANGELES, July 19: Whether it was Diego Maradona's drugs ban, Roberto Baggio's last minute goals, or Finidi George's bark, there was something to interest everyone at World Cup '94, reports AFP.

Russia's Oleg Salenko pulled out the stops against Cameroon to score a record five goals in one World Cup match when they won 6-1 in their group. But that was not enough to qualify following losses to Brazil and Sweden.

Saudi Arabia took over Cameroon's pioneering mantle from the last World Cup.

Cameroon moved through to the quarter-finals in 1990 to become the first African nation ever to go that far. This time, the Saudis became the first Asian nation to make the second round of the World Cup since North Korea managed it in 1966.

And striker Saeed Owairan's fifth minute solo goal, eventually enough to beat Belgium and qualify from Group F, was Maradona-like in its quality.

Owairan began the move inside his own half, beat four opponents before shooting past the advancing Michel Preud'homme from 12 metres. It was the first goal the Belgian goalkeeper had conceded.

Roberto Baggio's goals under extreme pressure finally closed the debate on whether he can produce his genius when it matters.

In the second round, Nigeria were only two minutes away from an historic win when the world and European player of 1993 struck.

And 10 minutes into extra time, Baggio lobbed a ball into the path of Antonio Benarrivo, who was knocked down by

## Brazilians yearn for more



FULLERTON, Calif., July 19 (AP): They came, they saw, they conquered the World Cup. It was almost enough to satisfy Brazilians.

Almost. Their country is the world's only four-time Cup winner, and the drought of 24 years without a title is over. And Brazilians celebrated wildly from the Amazon to the southern pampas.

But if fans were overjoyed with the win, they were underwhelmed at how it was achieved.

Brazil did it with a steel defense and a dogged, scrappy style that wore down their opponents. Offence was almost an afterthought: In four of their seven games, Brazil scored one goal or none.

That was evident to the estimated 2 billion people worldwide who watched Brazil beat Italy to a 0-0 tie for 120 minutes in Sunday's final at the Rose Bowl. Brazil finally won it 3-2 in a shootout.

Sure, it was efficient. But Brazilians expect more — they want artistry, magic, elegance, showtime. And there was precious little of that in this World Cup.

There were flashes, to be sure. Romario's runs up the middle, snaking through defenders, the ball glued to his foot. Or Bebeto's hip-fake on US defender Alex Lalas to find a gap for his winning shot and his dancing breakaway for a score against the Netherlands.

Even their opponents were impressed.

"They're awesome," said Lalas. "They're dribbling maestros. They come at you at 100 miles (160 kms) an hour."

But for many they were merely moments, a tantalising taste of what might have been. Brazilians have higher standards for themselves. After all, they gave the world Pele.

Coach Carlos Alberto Parreira says his critics are living in the past.

"The era of magic and dreams is over," he said.

## WORLD CUP NOTEBOOK

PASADENA, Calif., July 19 (AP): Brazil's World Cup victory won't show up in the official record.

The championship victory over Italy Sunday came in shootout, and that means that the final standings show Brazil and Italy tied in the last game.

Brazil finished with a record of five victories, two ties and no losses, the only unbeaten team in the tournament, according to statistics released by FIFA, soccer's governing body.

Italy were second on the official list, at 4-2-1.

Tiebreaker shootouts don't count as a victory or loss in the standings, and goals scored in the penalty shots don't count for an individual's tournament total. That means that — despite getting a goal in the shootout — Brazil's Romario finished with five goals, one less than World Cup leaders Oleg Salenko of Russia and Hristo Stoichkov of Bulgaria.

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"The era of magic and dreams is over," he said.

## THE RECORD KEEPS GROWING

The crowd of 94,194 at the Rose Bowl on Sunday swelled the World Cup record attendance for the first US edition to more than a million above the previous mark.

The total for World Cup USA was 3,567,415, compared with the previous record of 2,517,348 set in Italy four years ago.

Average attendance for the 52 games was 68,604.

The crowd for Sunday's championship match was the largest for the tournament, surpassing the 93,194 who watched the United States defeat Colombia in the first round at the Rose Bowl.

NEWS FROM THE JOB FRONT

When the final whistle blew Sunday to end the World Cup, thousands of staff employees for the US organising committee suddenly found themselves out of work or facing their final days on the payroll.

Most had resumes at the ready and were networking like mad to come up with new jobs. A few of the luckier ones had their next stop already booked.

Among the luckiest was one of the top officials of World Cup USA '94, managing director Scott Parks LeTeller.

He and Dick Kazmaier announced Sunday that they are starting a special-event promotion company called Eagle Sports Group. It will focus on big sports events, such as the next two World Cups and the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia.

And there was good news for some of Leteller's colleagues.

The new company, a press release said, "will include many employees of the highly successful World Cup USA 1994 Organising Committee."

## No tears only jeers

ROME, July 19: Italy's soccer coach Arrigo Sacchi flew home to jeers from disgruntled fans on Tuesday when he returned with the team after their defeat to Brazil in the World Cup final, reports Reuter.

About 1,000 supporters, some with tears in their eyes, gathered at Rome's Fiumicino Airport to see the squad return from Los Angeles where they went down to the Brazilians 3-2 on penalties on Sunday.

The players, many of them looking dejected, received a warm welcome but a group of fans waving banners of Italian club Lazio and chanting "Signori" heckled Sacchi.

In a controversial decision, Sacchi did not play Lazio striker and league top scorer Giuseppe Signori in the final.

"They're ignorant and I've had it up here to with ignorant people," Sacchi told reporters.

Star striker Roberto Baggio, whose missed penalty kick sealed Italy's defeat in the first World Cup decided on a penalty shoot-out, was one of the few players with a smile as he descended from the aircraft.

He blew kisses to the crowd before police escorted him to a minivan which carried him off to a reunion with friends and relatives.

Midfielder Antonio Benarrivo put a brave face on defeat saying Italy had proven itself "the second best team in the world."

"I can't believe all these people have come to thank us," Benarrivo said as he paraded with teammates in front of screaming fans after the 12-hour flight from Los Angeles.

Several players, including midfielders Dino Baggio and Roberto Donadoni and forward Gianfranco Zola, still seemed in shock over Italy's loss.

Donadoni, who frowned most of the time and hung his head low said some fans were ungrateful.

"We could have been spared some of these remarks," he said, referring to criticism of Sacchi's choice not to play Signori.

Signori, the Italian league's top scorer for the past two seasons, was bubbly over the turnout. "It makes me very happy to see all these people here," he said.

Zola, whose World Cup lasted about 10 minutes after he was sent off in the last 16 against Nigeria, walked way from the squad, his head down.

A fan favourite, the diminutive Sardinian had been eligible to play in the final but, like Signori, was relegated to the bench by Sacchi.

Players in the 22-strong squad were taking a two week vacation before rejoining their clubs to prepare for the new season, which starts in the first week of September.

## Bangladesh U-19 cricketers leave on July 25

## Sports Reporter

An 18-member under-19 Bangladesh cricket team leaves Dhaka on July 25 for the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur to participate in an international youth cricket tournament, scheduled to be held from July 28 to August 8.

Bangladesh begin their campaign against Papua New Guinea on July 30, the third day of the seven-nation meet. The participants of the tournament, originally designed to be an eight-term affair, were reduced to seven after the United Arab Emirates pulled out.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) has picked 15 players for the upcoming meet and is expected to name the three officials today.

Following is the tournament schedule for the Bangladesh squad:

July 30 : vs Papua New Guinea  
31 : vs Hong Kong  
August 3 : vs Malaysia  
4 : vs Denmark  
5 : vs Sri Lanka  
6 : vs East and Central Africa

## Nat'l b'ball from tomorrow

The Pepsi 17th national basketball championship begins at the wooden-floor gymnasium tomorrow, reports UNB.

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman will inaugurate the eight-day competition in the afternoon.

Eleven teams, divided into two groups, will participate in the meet organised by the Bangladesh Amateur Basketball Federation.

The teams are: Bangladesh Navy, Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Air Force, Bangladesh Rifles, Bangladesh Police, Rajshahi, Dhaka, Barisal, Brahmanbaria, Chandpur and Jessore DSAs.

## Sacchi, sad but satisfied

PASADENA, July 19: Beaten World Cup finalists Italy packed their bags for the long flight home on Monday reflecting on what might have been, reports Reuter.

"We emerged from hell and came within touching distance of paradise," coach Arrigo Sacchi said of Italy's painful progress from opening game defeat to the runners-up spot.

It took the first penalty shoot-out in a World Cup final to decide Sunday's showdown with Brazil after a scoreless 120 minutes but Sacchi was honest enough to admit the better team won.

"We have made enormous progress but Brazil at the moment have just that little bit extra," the coach told a news conference on Monday.

Sacchi gambled in the final by fielding ace attacker Roberto Baggio despite a hamstring strain and recalling veteran captain Franco Baresi just three weeks after knee surgery.

"Soccer is made up of so many factors and is about people. It seemed to me immoral not to pick Baggio and Baresi if they said they thought they could make it. They've been two of the most important players over the past three years," he said.

"I found myself in a strange situation because the support I have always enjoyed from the press was reduced to a minimum and the public also lost a little faith," he said.

"Sacchi coached an AC Milan

team featuring brilliant Dutchmen Ruud Gullit and Marco van Basten to Italian league and European Cup triumphs and was hired three years ago to bring Milan's spectacular soccer to the national team.

Little of that thrilling style has been seen but the professionalism and spirit which lift European Champions Milan out of the ordinary has been evident in this tournament.

Beaten by Ireland in their opening match, Italy came through to beat Norway with just 10 men in the next.

"That could have been the end for us but everyone pulled together at the vital time," said Sacchi.

The Italian coach said the heat and humidity of the United States had made it impossible for Italy to play its hard-running game to full potential.

But he judged the tournament, which has drawn record crowds, a great success.